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Coombe Lodge Report

Vol 7 No 16

Collection of Papers

Central and Local Government: Their Influence on F.E.

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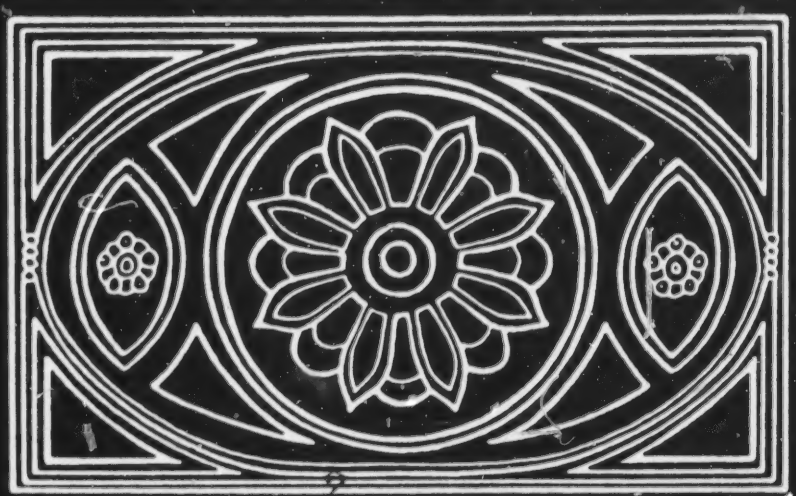

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CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT : THEIR INFLUENCE ON FE

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Collection of Papers

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FOREWORD

The flow of resources which promoted the educational expansion of recent years is drying up. Education is entering a period of stabilisation, or, at best, slow growth. Therefore we must learn to make the best possible use of all our resources : staff, buildings, equipment and income. This message rings clearly through papers given at Coombe Lodge over past months and collected together in this Report.

The first paper, by Mr. Rodmell, of the DES, gives an outline of the general economic background within which educational planning must take place. The remainder of the papers describe financial problems, other difficulties and some possible solutions which exist at local level. Mr. Davison describes how his county, Oxfordshire, is tackling its education budget. Three Chief Education Officers give contrasting and complementary accounts of their main problems and how they cope with them. Finally, to place education in its wider, but still local context, two Chief Executives describe the operation of corporate management systems in their authorities.

B E Rodmell,
Senior Economic
Adviser, Finance
Branch, Department
of Education
and Science.

NATIONAL RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

"I do not intend to give a technical lecture on economics but rather to sketch in the economic background within which educational planning has to take place. Education requires resources. These resources take two forms: people, with their various capabilities and skills, and goods, i.e. buildings, equipment, paper etc. Resources are usually expressed in monetary terms, mainly because the use of a common measure such as this allows them to be aggregated, and it is true that, over time, resources are increasingly convertible. However, money is more efficient as a measure when prices are stable. Existing resources are measured in terms of the capital (stock available) and income (flow being generated). While the capital stock is a vital determinant of current output, the nation as a whole, unlike an individual, cannot really run down its capital and so resource allocation at national level is concerned primarily with income.

conflicting demands on resources

At this national level there are conflicting demands upon resources because a nation, like an individual, has only a certain amount available. National resources are limited to the size of the National Product or National Income (two different ways of looking at the same thing, though with minor technical differences in the basis of measurement). The basic choice to be made is between consumption and investment. In 1973 the Gross National Product was £63.3 thousand million, or just over £1,100 per head of population. Of this total £50.5 thousand million (80%) was spent on consumption and £13.9 thousand million (22%) on investment. This represents a rather higher proportion of expenditure on consumption than occurs in most other economically advanced countries. It should be noted that these percentage figures add up to rather more than 100%, showing that we consumed more than we produced. The difference is accounted for by the trade deficit, which we finance by borrowing from other countries, a process that cannot continue indefinitely.

A secondary division of the total expenditure on consumption can be made between private expenditure of £37.8 thousand million (60% of GNP) and public expenditure of £12.7 thousand million (20% of GNP). Carrying this analysis a little further, public consumption can be divided into expenditure by Central Government of approximately £7.5 thousand million and that by local government which accounted for £5.5 thousand million, but since the finances of central and local government are so intertwined care is needed in interpreting these figures.

The division between public and private expenditure was called a 'secondary' one because there is no hard and fast rule dividing the nature of the two sectors. Practice in other countries varies, and, for example, health is largely a private sector activity in the USA and oil refining is a public sector activity in Italy. The boundary between the two shifts over time - in this country a considerable part of the health service was in the private sector in the pre-war years. Is there then any significance in drawing this distinction? At one level of argument the answer would be 'none'. Whether health, for example, is in the public or private sector, it still has to be paid for. At another level, however, there are important reasons for distinguishing between the two. Public expenditure has tended to have a faster rate of growth than private sector spending. As a community becomes more prosperous, and once the basic needs of food and clothing, usually provided by the private sector, have been met, people's wants tend to diversify. Some of their 'new' wants can be met by the private sector but the tendency is for public provision to become more important. The reasons for this are manifold: the goods or services demanded may be indivisible (roads, law and order); there may be economics of provision (broadcasting); the demand may be collective (education); or the need may be felt for redistributive policies based on age, misfortune or social class.

Another reason for making the distinction is that public expenditure is tax financed and this may have implications for work incentives and also raises political overtones. There is further significance, too, in that the financing of the public sector is an instrument of national economic management. National income is a circular flow with just over three-quarters (77%) of the total income arising as earnings of those in employment and rather under three-quarters (70% including expenditure taxes) of total expenditure arising from consumer spending generating further employment. Exports, investment and public expenditure represent additions to this circular flow, and imports, savings and taxes represent subtractions from it. Through its control over the levels of public expenditure and taxes the Government can therefore influence this circular flow. Lastly, the size of the public sector has a political importance. For all these reasons successive governments have sought to regulate the growth of public expenditure. Since the late 1960s the aim has been that the growth rate should not significantly exceed that of the GNP. This is a reversal of the historical tendency for it to have a faster growth rate than that of the GNP.

problems facing the educational planner

This country is now experiencing a slow rate of economic growth. The GNP is rising by less than 3% per annum and even this growth rate is likely to decline over the next year or two. According to last year's White Paper (Cmnd. 5519) the planned growth of public expenditure was an average of 2% per annum until 1977-78, and since this forecast includes a relative price effect element (an allowance for public sector costs rising faster than those elsewhere), the planners were projecting a growth rate for public expenditure rather below 2% in real terms and significantly lower than the past trend growth of GNP.

There is great competition for shares in the allocation of public expenditure. To illustrate this point I will shift the statistical basis form Blue Book figures to those in the Public Expenditure White Papers. The figures in the two sources

are not comparable since the White Papers, unlike the Blue Book, include transfer payments. On the White Paper basis public expenditure totalled £32.3 thousand million in the last (1973-74) financial year, of which education with related services received £4.4 thousand million and was the largest single item apart from social security which accounted for £5.5 thousand million. The other large items were defence (£3.5 thousand million), health (nearly £3.5 thousand million) and housing (£2.2 thousand million). Thus education now accounts for 13½% of total public expenditure (or about 6½% of the GNP). In recent times its share has grown rapidly. Ten years ago it received about 12½% of total public expenditure and a decade earlier its share was about 8%. This expansion was partly sustained by a decline in the percentage allocated to defence in recent years, but currently the rapidly growing areas of health and social security are competing for public funds with education. Thus there is now less scope for above-average growth rates in education expenditure, although the 1973 White Paper did forecast its annual growth rate as 3.4% per annum (or 4.8% per annum if the relative price effect is included). However, such a growth rate was hard to sustain, and the December 1973 cuts followed on the very day of publication of the White Paper.

The rapid growth which occurred in education expenditure over most of the post-war era was largely a consequence of the increased numbers of pupils in schools and the increased proportion of those pupils who wanted post-school education. Expenditure rose more than proportionately, partly because the capital stock had to be increased to cope with these larger numbers, and partly because of improvements in the pupil teacher ratio, though with very limited improvements in other forms of provision. This rapid growth rate was accepted by the Ministers responsible for other Government departments who were competing for public funds because of the public expenditure convention that the same level of service should be maintained per head to meet the expected numbers. Interdepartmental arguments were mainly concerned with proposed changes in public policy, and not with continuing the same policy which had only become more expensive because the number of consumers had increased.

Under this convention education would inevitably have faced a slower growth rate in the future as the birth rate has been falling since 1964 and the primary school numbers are already declining. However, this convention of incrementalism is now changing, a process partly due to the growth rate of public expenditure itself. Policy Analysis Reviews (PAR) have brought a more searching analysis to bear and an opportunity to consider alternative means of provision. The Education White Paper of December 1972 redirected resources into the provision of nursery education and the rebuilding of primary schools. These policies were to be partly financed from savings due to the decreasing numbers of pupils, the expected benefits of economies of scale in Higher Education provision, the declining rate of growth in student demand for Higher Education and the slowing down of the improvement in the schools' pupil teacher ratio.

recent intensification of problems

Recently the problems facing the education planner have become more acute. The overall resource pressures have intensified. Even without the oil crisis the balance of payments was proving worse than had been forecast. Raw material prices have risen more than was expected, partly because of the increased political awareness of the less developed countries, and therefore even more of our national output is needed to pay for them, with less left over for domestic uses, including public consumption.

Additional problems within the educational sector have arisen from reductions in birthrate projections and consequent downward revision of school pupil forecasts since 1972. To achieve the Education White Paper's standards of provision by 1981, 550 thousand instead of 700 thousand nursery places will be needed and only 4.1 million primary places compared with the present provision in primary schools of 4.9 million. In addition, the number of students wanting higher education is proving to be rising less rapidly than would be needed to fulfil the forecast for 1981 of 750 thousand places. This is due to falling participation rates rather than falling population. Fewer pupils than expected are staying on in schools (a trend which is not offset by the numbers entering FE), fewer than expected are getting two GCE 'A' levels, and fewer of these are seeking entry to higher education. The last Secretary of State had indicated that the number of places needed in higher education in 1981 would be nearer 700 thousand than 750 thousand, and current projections foresee the number as less than 700 thousand. These falling numbers are rather two-edged for the educational planner. On the one hand they ease the pressure on resources, but on the other they create new problems of adaptation. We may not need all the 510 thousand teachers foreseen for 1981, and this could mean a faster run-down of the colleges of education (though there are limits to this process) and rather more space available for conversion to the FE sector. However, they also mean that the expected economies of scale will be harder to achieve. The White Paper had expected an overall student staff ratio of 10:1 in higher education by 1981 and the Pooling Committee's recommended staffing norms for 1976 were regarded as one aspect of this process.

In this situation of increasing national resource pressures, and with education facing the likelihood of a fall in the forecast rate of demand growth, it is natural for the other central government departments to expect further reductions in the growth of expenditure on education. Under the resource pressures there is a tendency for the old public expenditure convention to reassert itself, with funds being allocated to maintain existing standards for only the lower forecast numbers and a sharp cut-down on planned improvements.

There is one additional complication for which allowance must be made, and this results from the current rate of inflation. All project forecasts are made in real terms but education is about five-sixths local authority financed. While local authorities receive about 60% of their income from the Rate Support Grant they depend for most of the rest upon local rates. Rateable values are fixed in money terms and there is political resistance to increases. It is therefore very difficult to keep the money yield of rates in line with the inflationary increases in expenditure. The Layfield Committee is examining

alternative sources of local authority income. One solution being widely canvassed politically is to transfer some of the responsibility for education finance from local to central government, teachers' salaries being one item that has been mentioned in this connection. However, this solution is not as attractive as it may seem at first sight. It is unlikely to bring extra resources into education as it would entail a cut in the Rate Support Grant, and it is unpopular with local education authorities.

Economics is known as the 'dismal science' and my message has been rather gloomy. Resources are likely to be limited in the future and education will have a slow growth rate. Therefore we must now, more than ever, consider ways of making the best use of the limited resources which are available."

W H P Davison,
County Treasurer,
Oxfordshire
County Council

COST CONTROL AND THE USE OF RESOURCES - A LOCAL AUTHORITY VIEW

"When I was asked to speak on this subject it was suggested that I might cover the pressures on local authorities, their methods of budgetting to allocate limited funds between competing claims, the means of controlling costs in further education, current problems and possible development. As most of these are subjects that I live with every day I happily agreed although one of them I was not quite so happy about, that is the means of controlling costs in further education. On this subject I do not claim to be an expert nor even to be a firm believer that we have gone very far along the line in what ought to be done in this field.

pressures

Let me start, however, with the easier bit for me, that is to describe how the pressures have built up on local authorities in framing their budgets. I can remember my first experiences just before the war when really one could almost take last year's estimates and repeat them in order to achieve this year's budget. This situation did not, however, last for long. After the war, of course, the spate of post war legislation imposed a host of new powers and duties on local authorities. This meant that one was constantly budgetting for something new and as the years went by the situation developed where legislation and public expectation produced a level of demand which was difficult to finance from available resources, largely because of the ambivalent attitude of governments. They were quite willing to encourage local authority expenditure but not always to provide resources by way of government grant to meet the level of demand which resulted.

Slowly at first but now rapidly a new dimension - inflation - was added to this problem. The effect of inflation on local authorities is felt strongly in two ways, firstly because they are labour intensive, and secondly because their residual source of income, that is, the rates, have a base of rateable values which are not buoyant, do not increase with inflation and do not reflect ability to pay. At present, something like 60% of local authority expenditure is met by government grant, and therefore if authorities spend more than is supported by Rate Support Grant a 1% increase in unsupported expenditure gives as a result a 2½% increase in the local rate.

To these pressures have recently been added problems arising from the reorganisation of local government and in addition a massive switch of government grant between types of authorities.

And now, as a final pressure on our budgetting we have the situation of the national economy. I think there is a general acceptance that in a large part of our problems have been brought on us by living beyond our means and that part of the remedy is to hold the expansion of public expenditure which at present takes some 50% of the gross national product, local authority expenditure being some 17% and having been growing at an average rate of 7% for some years. A recent development on this subject is the Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement of the intention to hold the growth in public expenditure to a $2\frac{1}{4}$% rate over the next four years.

So much for a brief run-down on the pressures on local authorities.

budgetting method

Now for a word on budgetting. The old traditional method of budgetting was to start by asking establishments and departments what they considered their requirements would be for the coming year and after discussion of these items to include what was felt to be appropriate in the estimates and then in the end to see whether the total appeared to be possible. If the resultant rate in the pound seemed to be too much then last moment adjustments were made in order to arrive at a total which seemed to be reasonable.

In my experience this system broke down in the period which I have described when the pressure of demand for services became so great. My own experience was that the traditional process produced totals that by any measure were so much too large that big reductions had to be made. Not only was it difficult to suggest a sensible basis for making these reductions, but members of local authorities were found to be unwilling to make this type of decision. On top of this bad publicity resulted because even though the first estimates showed huge increases on the previous year, any reduction of them became a cut in everyone's eyes and resulted in the sort of battle ground which is probably familiar to most people.

Oxfordshire system

We therefore reversed the system. Perhaps I could describe what happened in the old Oxfordshire system which has been adopted by the new County. We started at the beginning of the financial year. We made a statistical examination of the demands for services in the county and the cost comparisons with other counties, then we moved on to estimate the financial resources that would be available to us in the following year. Alongside this total we set expenditure targets for the various services. These targets were built up by deriving growth rates from the Public Expenditure White Paper, which is the best indication available of what level of expenditure might be supported by Rate Support Grant, and adjusting these in the light of local circumstances such as changes in population, pupil numbers and so on as well as the cost comparisons. From these target figures, we deducted the estimated cost of maintaining the present standard of service in the new year and by deduction, derived a balance available for new policies and projects. These were examined in the following quarter, and to the November Council we brought a Development Budget so that all new policies and projects could be considered across the board and priorities established. The detailed estimates were then prepared and came to the February Council meeting, and

if all the spade work had been done properly and Rate Support Grant worked out as we had estimated, really the only decision at February was the level of the County rate taking into account balances and so on.

Of course, as the years went by, inflation became a factor which one had to learn to deal with and the system now is that budget plans are made in constant price terms based on pay and price levels pertaining as at November. And so the 1975-76 budget plans have so far been made on the basis of November 1973 pay and price levels. When the participation of detailed estimates starts the base is updated from one November to the next so that the 1975-76 detailed estimates are being prepared at November 1974 pay and price levels and when we come to make the rate we shall include in our budget a contingency provision for inflation arising from November 1974 to March 1976. This, of course, is where the crystal ball comes in. In the current year in Oxfordshire we provided £6 million for inflation. This was a good deal more than most authorities provided but even so we may well find ourselves spending in gross terms some £9 million by the time the year ends.

Of course, while talking about problems, I should add that we had particular problems with our 1974-75 estimates being the first in the era of the new County. This meant in the case of Oxfordshire we had to bring together the estimates for the services which would be administered by the new county from the old Oxfordshire, the old Oxford City, a large part of North Berkshire, as well as some services from Districts while at the same time transferring figures out of our budget to the new Health Authorities. When Government added problems of changes in grant systems, differential rating and a variety of relief to ratepayers, this year's became without doubt the most difficult budget of all time.

budget plans for 1975-76

Perhaps I might mention the problems that Oxfordshire are facing in making budget plans for 1975-76? The background to it all is of course primarily the huge rate increases in 1974-75. The Oxfordshire County Rate increased by 51%, the two biggest factors in this being of course inflation and the switch of Rate Support Grant away from rural counties to urban areas which alone increased the county rate by 28%. When District and Water and Sewerage rates were added some ratepayers found themselves facing 70% increases in their rate demands. Naturally, there was an overwhelming reaction from the ratepayers and eventually additional relief of £150 million to domestic ratepayers was eventually given. This, of course, did not help industry and commerce and still left domestic ratepayers bearing sizeable increases. On top of all this, the economic situation had transparently become so much worse and we had had a change of Government so the Public Expenditure White Paper had really become a useless document. So our problem was how were we to set about making a budget plan for 1975-6.

All I was able to do for the July meeting of the Council was to give a statistical examination of the Council's situation, together with an estimate that existing commitments would involve a growth of expenditure of 5% in 1975-76, in constant price terms, therefore, something like a 25% increase in the County

rate assuming that our expenditure was supported by Rate Support Grant. The result was that the Council asked for four budget plans to be prepared to show the effect of attempting to live within growth rates of 3%, nil and -5% in comparison with the committed 5%. Their object in this was firstly to have contingency plans in hand for when there was a better indication of how much grant money might be available but perhaps more importantly to bring home to the public generally the drastic consequences for the Council's services of finding reductions of this order.

The four budget plans were considered by the Council at their November meeting. At this time there was no firm indication of Government grant for the coming year but the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given a very clear warning that it would be prudent to budget on a stand-still basis plus the minimum of inescapable commitments. In the days before the Council meeting, one Minister after another spoke in similar terms, and the consequence was that the Council which actually sat on Budget Day resolved that detailed estimates should be prepared on a 3% growth rate basis as compared with my latest estimate of a $3\frac{1}{2}$% committed growth. Later in the day the Chancellor announced the intention of holding the growth of public expenditure to $2\frac{3}{4}$% over the next four years.

The Council's decision means finding savings totalling £$\frac{3}{4}$ million over the Council's services and as education takes two-thirds of our expenditure it is inevitable that education has to find something like £$\frac{1}{2}$ million, although other services' reductions are greater proportionately. This, of course, has provoked a tremendous local reaction, and the most frequent comment is whether it is worth saving a $\frac{1}{2}$p. on the rate to have this effect on education when inflation may increase the rate by at least 9p. The answer one gives to that is that if the rate of growth of expenditure is not reduced in constant price terms, then nothing will have been done to help the battle against inflation.

So we are going on preparing our detailed estimates now with our fingers firmly crossed that our approach is right and that Rate Support Grant will be forthcoming in sufficient volume to make the resultant rate level acceptable. This is always in question, because the amount that an individual authority receives by way of Rate Support Grant depends on three things: firstly, the level of expenditure which is accepted by the Government as recognisable for Rate Support Grant; secondly, the percentage of that expenditure which they will meet, whether it is the 60.5% which was the figure for 1974-75 or more; and thirdly by what formula the national total is to be distributed to local authorities.

I think the likelihood is that the £150 million extra domestic relief which was announced in July this year will be fed into the Domestic Element of Rate Support Grant and that the over-all percentage will be calculated so as to leave an average increase in domestic ratepayers' rates of a tolerable order, although what is thought to be tolerable could, in my opinion, well be

something like 20%.* As part of this deal, local authorities would be expected to give an undertaking to employ no more staff in total, and by that I mean total staff - administrative, teachers, manual, everyone on the payroll - and also to live within the level of recognised expenditure.

This is an interesting development because it implies a new style of partnership between Central Government and Local Government and to me carries an implication that if the rate of inflation increases even more then the Government will have to come to the aid of local authorities during the year. Of course, these measures are interim measures while the Layfield Committee sits and makes its enquiries into the various possibilities for a new system of finance for local government in the future.

I am sure you are aware of the discussions that have been going on for decades now about the need for local authorities to have a separate source of revenue apart from rates. Discussions would probably have gone on interminably had it not been for inflation. I am sure that it is inflation that has made everyone question the rating system in a way they had never done before because of the lack of buoyancy of the rating base. The main criticisms are the fact that it is a regressive tax and does not reflex ability to pay and the question whether recipients of services other than ratepayers should not bear a local tax.

Layfield Committee

A lot of possibilities were mentioned in the Green Paper on Local Government Finance and no doubt will be examined by the Layfield Committee. These include a local income tax, a poll tax, the petrol tax, or the vehicle tax, lotteries, the proceeds of land transactions if the new Land White Paper comes to legislation and so on. In addition, at election time, we heard the different parties' views as to what they would do including, for example, the transfer of teachers' salaries to the Exchequer. Perhaps I might list some of the principles which I believe should guide the Layfield Committee in their decision. Firstly, there is the question of the independence of local authorities - the necessity for a healthy local democracy and whether this depends on an independent source of revenue or whether it could be maintained even though local authorities were dependent on Central Government funds. Secondly, the local tax or taxes should reflect ability to pay. Thirdly they should be fair and should relate sensibly to those who receive the local authority services. Fourthly, their local incidence should be acceptable. Now this seems to me the most difficult point of all, because I cannot identify a local source of revenue for local authorities, the product of which would be equal from one authority to another. Obviously, the revenue from the petrol tax in, say, Oxfordshire, is a good deal higher than in, say, Cumbria, as would be the product of a local income tax. Taking the latter suggestion would it be acceptable that to provide a reasonable

*This paper was given in December 1974, before the Rate Support Grant settlement increased the Domestic Element from 13p to 18.5p. The overall grant percentage was increased from 60.5 to 66.5 with the intention of producing average increases in domestic rate payments of 25%.

standard of service in Oxfordshire there should be a local income tax of, say, 4% and to achieve the same level of service, Cumbria would need a local tax of 7%? I am sure that this would not be acceptable and therefore some equalisation scheme would be necessary. If this does have to be done then it seems to me we might just as well depend on having a share of national taxation. I personally believe that a good deal more study should go to the system of shared revenues such as operates in some countries where, for example, a percentage of certain taxes belongs to local government as of right. If this could be achieved and at the same time a proper partnership between Central and Local Government reached so that local government are involved in the first decisions of allocation of national resources I think we should have made a considerable step forward.

Well, those are the pressures on us, the methods we are using, and our worries and preoccupations at the moment.

cost control

If I could turn now to the other part of the subject which I was asked to speak about, that is, means of controlling cost and allocating resources within a service. The first factor really is the one that we have been talking about so far, that is, the developed budgetary system and budgetary control that local authorities operate and about which I hardly need say more.

I have already mentioned comparative statistics. Statistics are produced by the Society of County Treasurers and the Institute of Public Finance each year which give comparisons between all local authorities of the costs of services broken down wherever possible into unit costs such as cost per pupil in primary schools and in secondary schools and so on. In the absence of any profit tests or useful measure of output, these are extremely valuable as background statistics. I do not suggest that they should be used as more than a tool to discover where further investigation might be made. A recent innovation adopted, incidentally, from Oxfordshire is that these statistics are now produced on the budgetted figures of local authorities rather than on the last completed year of account and therefore are much more useful as management documents.

An area on which I am very keen and which is becoming much more fashionable now is that of management audits, performance review, policy review. A variety of titles are given to similar sorts of activities. I think these can be the most intelligent and most useful approaches to a proper cost control, that is, not just control of the spending of money but assurance of the best value for money.

The breakdown of, for example, the education budget and the control of it logically follows from a subjective analysis of the expenditure. Well over 50% goes in salaries and wages, and therefore is broken down and controlled by the agreement of pupil/teacher ratios and staff establishments. When debt charges, rent and rates and other similar items from the remainder of the budget are excluded what remains can broadly be described as supplies and services and the most common practice is to arrive at these and control them on a capitation basis."

J C D Rainbow,
Chief Education
Officer, Lancashire
County Council.

PROBLEMS FACING CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICERS

management

I have been asked to talk about the problems facing Chief Education Officers and it may seem, therefore, a little strange if I start by speaking of management. But, of course, the problems facing those of us who do my job are divided into two groups. There are those problems which face Chief Education Officers at any time, and there are those peculiar to the present time. Amongst the first group, that is those problems which have always been there, and always will be there, are those that stem from the primary function of the Chief Education Officer which is to manage the Education Service in his area. I think it is important to remember particularly at present when so much is written and spoken about management, and so many managers are being trained as never before, that there is in fact nothing esoteric about it. We all became managers in a sense, whether we liked it or not, when we first started earning and had to manage our domestic income, not only to make sure that there was enough money for the housekeeping each week, but that we were saving up for a new car, or for a new holiday, or whatever. As life goes on some of us have to do a little more than that. Some people find that they are managing a small business, some become foremen in industry or junior executives and are responsible for something rather larger than earned income for their own family. At a certain point, however, a change comes. This is very important because I must distinguish between the Chief Education Officer of a small Authority and the Chief of a large one. At a certain point, and it is very difficult to define the precise point, there is a difference which develops in kind as well as degree. It is true, of course, of any organisation, not merely the Education Service, and it comes about at the point when the head of the organisation cannot know all that goes on. In other words, the thing has become too big for one man to be able to exercise direct and immediate control over all its parts and manifold activities. This affects the organisation both in type and, indeed, in style.

When an organisation reaches this size then the head of it must do two things. First of all he must delegate, and secondly he must choose the points at which he intervenes in the organisation. I pause here to remind you of what we mean when we are talking of a big organisation in the Education Service, and for obvious reasons I use Lancashire as my example. The County is one of the five biggest Local Authorities in the country, the others being Essex, Hampshire, Kent and Inner London. In Lancashire we are responsible for something like a quarter of a million children, 100,000 full and part-time students working in over 900 schools and colleges. The organisation has

within it 25,000 employees of all kinds, and spends something like £100 million a year. It encompasses not merely schools, colleges of further education, colleges of education and a polytechnic, but less obvious perhaps, but equally important parts of the service such as looking after thousands of acres of playing fields, serving 180,000 meals a day through its school meals service, and so on.

Given this kind of Authority, of this size, then the first problem facing any Chief Education Officer is the selection of staff and the creation of an organisation which allows effective delegation and in consequence an efficient administrative machine. The second problem arises, as I have said, from the when and where of his own intervention, and this greatly depends on the Chief Education Officer's view of his own role. If he regards himself simply as a manager then he can stop at the point at which the machine is working efficiently, and his own role will be to ensure continuous smooth running so that schools and colleges, and, of course, the Education Committee itself, are adequately serviced and that the available resources are fairly distributed between the various elements of the service. This, of course, is a very narrow view and I don't think is taken by any Education Officer I know. Most of us regard ourselves as educators and it is indeed vital that we should. We are ourselves concerned not merely to run efficiently an administrative machine, but to develop the Education Service in our areas; to initiate, to encourage. This is where the real problems develop, indeed where they are created, because everything depends on the Chief Education Officer's assessment of priorities and the acceptance or rejection or modification of these by his Committee. Some developments arise entirely from his own educational philosophy. Others arise from the judgements he forms as the result of information coming into him and it is very important that this information is comprehensive. He receives reports from colleagues, particularly from the advisory service in a big Authority, and from the teachers' organisations. Some reports he asks for himself. He receives information through the press and in my own Authority all reports affecting education are collected and sent to me by our own Publicity Department, along with information concerning parliamentary activity, on what is happening in other Local Authorities, and another very valuable source of information is that coming from Councillors who, in highlighting local problems, and sometimes individual cases, cause one to realise that in fact a more general problem exists. Not only are there current problems but also those which arise from one's view of the way ahead. The final choice is made in this country, and rightly so in my view, by elected members and the relationship between Chief Education Officer and Committee is a vital one. It is not a question of the Chief Education Officer's view always being accepted but of a rapport being established between the Committee and himself, and, very important, between the Chairman and himself. The Committee must feel confidence in him and feel able to rely on him for honest and as far as possible objective advice.

current problems

I have glanced at the problems a Chief Education Officer must face in a Local Education Authority at any time; problems of staff, organisation,

relationships with elected members, and I have mentioned his key role in giving advice on future developments. I should like now to turn to the more specific problems facing the Chief Education Officer today in what the Prime Minister has described as the gravest economic situation since 1930.

retrenchment

The Education Service has enjoyed almost continuous expansion since the war. That period now seems temporarily to be at an end. We must accept this because the Education Service cannot and should not opt out of the national crisis. In one respect I believe it may have beneficial effects because it is true that for a long period of years now we have experienced annual growth, some years more than others, but we have in fact grown like Topsy. And we have never been forced to examine with any care whether the base, so to speak, was a sound one. In other words, each year we have worked out how much it costs to do what we did in the previous year. That has formed the base and then we have added to it according to our own assessment of priorities. I believe that now we have reached a period when we shall be forced to examine how we spend what we spend. The problems facing not merely Chief Education Officers but all of us in such a time are frightening. At the very best we are told there will be no expansion. At the worst we may have to make cuts in the service which we all regard as of such tremendous importance. These cuts must be made in areas which will least affect the children and young people and many adults for whom we are all, in a sense, responsible.

I hope we can examine the base as I have described it with objectivity and some degree of unity. I have regretted as much as anyone the polarisation of certain educational matters which has resulted from vocal and often not very knowledgeable extremists in both political parties. It seems to me in fact that there is a very broad area of agreement amongst the vast majority of people in this country, and it is this unity which we should encourage. The danger in making cuts is that we destroy the very unity which we should be working for. So we must tread with extreme care. In a period of retrenchment Chief Education Officers' problems are probably greater than they have ever been.

teacher supply

I believe that we must examine as never before certain aspects of our service, many of which have appeared to be sacrosanct. I think we must look very carefully at the teachers' supply position. It is not enough merely to relate this to a falling population. It must be related to an ultimate objective of class size. We do need a national consensus of our goal so that we can measure how far we have to go to that goal, and how much we can do in any one year, especially when money is in short supply. But I think most Chief Education Officers will agree with me that teachers are the most vital ingredient, so to speak, in the Education Service.

administrative support

We must go on to look at the use we make of increasingly expensive highly trained professional staff. In far too many instances we are using the most senior members of the profession as clerical assistants, and in my view this is having an adverse effect on the profession itself and on the children and

students whom we serve. It really makes no sense at all to employ a man, for example, as Head of a big Department, then deny him adequate clerical help so that he reduces his own teaching time in order to fill in order forms for the books and equipment needed, and engage in other purely clerical activities of this kind. Secondly, we must look at the deployment of staff between the further education, secondary and primary sectors to make certain that everyone is getting a fair share of available resources.

rationalisation

We must look at small uneconomic units, whether they be schools or small colleges of further education, and question whether they should be continued. We must look also at uneconomic overlapping in in-service training. The in-service training of teachers is absolutely vital and no profession in this country has shown a greater awareness of this and, indeed, a greater willingness, often voluntarily and in its own time, to undergo re-training in order to keep up-to-date with changes in knowledge and teaching method. But courses are provided by the universities, by colleges of education, by the advisory services of Local Authorities, and other bodies, and to the best of my knowledge there is no co-ordination of any kind between these courses. So some courses which should take place do not take place, and other courses are duplicated and triplicated quite unnecessarily. Between separate institutions there can be even more uneconomic overlapping of subject courses. We must look, for example, at colleges of further education, particularly in areas of dense population, where they may be quite close geographically to one another and question themselves whether it is really necessary for every college to offer everything.

use of buildings

We must go on to look at the economic use of buildings. The building situation never has been ideal but we have spent a lot of money in all sectors of the Education Service and I wonder how we would come out of a close examination of the use that we make of our plant, even during school or college hours. I am not certain of the answer to that one though you may have seen the result of some recent research which indicates a very serious under-use of plant. When we come to the use we make of buildings throughout the year then, of course, it is much easier to measure, and there is no doubt that whilst millions of pounds worth of buildings are standing empty in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays, other public money is being spent on providing community facilities, facilities for the youth service and for adult education, and I really think the time has come when we have got to examine carefully the possibility of so designing a school or college building that it is suitable for use by the whole of the community - morning, noon and night throughout the year. We must stop thinking of an education budget in isolation. How ludicrous it is to buy 20 acres for a 7 form-entry school because the Building Regulations say so, and then use it for exactly 50% of the year, and then find that the Local Council is buying equally expensive recreation land sometimes adjacent to the school itself. When one is talking of £20 - £30,000 an acre as we have been doing in recent years the position becomes all too clear.

16-19

We must look very hard also at the 16-19 age range. I believe in the maximum of choice, but we cannot afford unnecessary duplication. I do not believe we can afford, and I have serious doubts about the educational value of, very small sixth forms. I wonder if in the desire for flexibility we have produced too many options without questioning their educational value. I think we must face the problem of the division between schools and further education for this age range.

Well obviously I have only given a few examples from what could be a very long list. What I am really saying is that in these times nothing in the Education Service must be regarded as sacrosanct and any Chief Education Officer worth his salt will be examining these and many other areas of the service to make absolutely certain that the limited money available is being spent in the best interests of all the customers.

communication in large local authorities

Change inevitably involves problems because if we are honest none of us likes change. In a big Local Authority it highlights yet another problem for the Chief Education Officer, and that is the problem of communication. We are forced these days I think, and shall be increasingly forced, towards the creation of big Authorities for the very simple reason that the smaller Authority, with all the goodwill in the world, with the finest elected members and Officers imaginable, simply does not have the resources to provide a complete Education Service in its area. But the big Authority does have this problem of communication and it is one which we must try to solve. In Lancashire, as with many Authorities, we have a Teachers' Consultative Committee, we have teachers sitting on the Education Committee itself, we have teachers on Governing Bodies, and so on. But many thousands of people working in the Education Service cannot, and many do not want, to sit on such bodies as these, and yet I believe that they do want to know and, indeed, have a right to know what is going on. I believe in open administration. I believe in the involvement of professional colleagues in the decision-making process, and to achieve this one cannot stop at the representation stage, one has got to create channels through which the views and hopes and ambitions of all one's colleagues in the service can be made known. This is, as I have said, particularly important at the present time and will become increasingly so as we move into this period of perhaps rather painful change and adjustment.

corporate management

Having tackled, I won't say solved, the problems of staffing and organisation and day-to-day difficulties, and forward planning and communication, and all these other things at which I have glanced, the Chief Education Officer today must also be involved in what is fashionably described as "corporate management", and I would just like to say a word about this. It is important that an Authority, the County Council and the chief advisers to that County Council get together and plan for the future jointly, perhaps in a way that we have failed to do in the past. It is no good the modern Chief Education Officer thinking that he can plough his lonely furrow, irrespective of what is going on elsewhere in the community. There must be a fair distribution of resources between education and social services and all the other services for which local government is responsible, and decisions should be made on a proper assessment of these priorities, and not just on the accident of historical

growth, or the individual power and influence of a former Chief Officer in whatever Department. So I believe in corporate management. But having said that there is a real danger that corporate management might come to mean not the sort of forward planning that I have described but the attempt to do one another's jobs. There is, I believe, a danger today that we shall become so busy talking about one another's problems and perhaps even interfering in one another's legitimate activities that we shall discuss ourselves into a state of paralysis and not be left with enough time, let alone energy to run effectively the service for which we have responsibility and, let us say it, which we know better than other people how to run. I cannot build roads. I do not know how to run a fire service, or cope with the complexities of estate management, or cope with the design of buildings and so on. If I know anything at all it is about education, and we should not be ashamed as educators of proclaiming our professional knowledge and experience and expertise, and being allowed to get on with the job which we know how to do. I merely enter that caveat which I believe to be important, not as an argument against corporate management but as an argument for the right kind of corporate management.

CEO as spokesman for his colleagues

Finally, I think the Chief Education Officer is faced with the problem, perhaps a better word is the responsibility, for being the spokesman for his colleagues in the Education Service. Not the sole spokesman as I would hope that many others would speak as he should, but I think the whole Education Service must speak very plainly and very clearly to every citizen in this country, and I think we have got to say to our fellow workers in other fields, and particularly in industry, that we in education spend the money which they make. No nation has ever had unlimited financial resources. Every nation within its resources has to decide what it can afford on its Education Service, just as it decides what it can afford on other services. Many of our problems today and for the next few years will stem from lack of money, and we may be faced with cutting down the service we have built up over a long period of years. That is not for people like me to decide, it is for the community as a whole to decide through its elected representatives in local government and in parliament itself.

selfishness

But I would say this, and I say it fearlessly because it affects us so much. Every man or woman who goes on strike against the advice of Union or Association, or before the established procedures of negotiation have been used must lower production and so provide fewer goods for this country to sell in order to make money for us to spend on education. Every man or woman who demands in wages excessive rises that we cannot afford exacerbates the economic problems that we are facing, and an inevitable consequence of this will be lower prosperity for the nation and less money again for education. Every man or woman who is self-employed and who fails to pay the taxes which he ought to pay is not making his fair contribution and education will be less good in consequence. Every man or woman who indulges in needless absenteeism, who 'fiddles' the sick pay rules, who doesn't do an honest day's work for a day's pay is guilty in the same way.

To all such people I say you are preventing your children and your neighbour's children from receiving the education we surely all wish them to receive. You are preventing that improvement in, and expansion of, the service which will enable all young people to improve the quality of life they will lead and thus impairing the contribution they in their turn will be able to make in Britain and in the rest of the world.

Yes, Chief Education Officers and all their colleagues in the Education Service face great problems today. But the greatest they cannot solve alone. The blinkered selfishness of our nation is the biggest problem of all. Everyone must be involved in solving that. Perhaps we shall eventually learn that we can only have what we earn. I dream, I hope not fruitlessly, that we shall soon wake up in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and decide to work at maximum efficiency, longer hours if necessary, whether we be boss or most junior employee, in order to provide the Education Service we need and must have: a service which will provide genuine opportunity for all i.. a prosperous and caring society."

Miss G M Rickus,
Director of Education,
London Borough
of Brent

PROBLEMS FACING CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICERS

"I should start by saying that in my view my own Authority is not typical of the whole country and is not even typical of the Outer London Boroughs. Brent has its special problems which make it more like Inner London, where the education is provided over the group of Boroughs by the ILEA.

measurement of efficiency

The theme of this conference "Improving the Efficiency of Departments" is one which I consider to be of basic concern for a Chief Education Officer, not only in the context of the individual department of a college, but in the broader context of the education service. One of our main tasks is to ensure the efficient use of the resources that society provides for us. And the allied problem is how we can measure efficiency in using these resources. The Managing Director of a commercial or manufacturing undertaking, spending as I do about £20,000,000 in a year, has no problem in this regard. He has a ready yardstick - that of profitability. He may discover that his forecast has been wrong, but he certainly knows when he does his accounts whether he has got the right answer. But not so the Manager of the Education Service and the need for this measurement becomes greater at the same time as the pressures against applying the measurement also become greater.

The great majority of students, and here I am speaking about those of secondary school age particularly, do not even bring the results of their teaching to be examined by an outside Body and their lives as adults may, on the one hand reflect the benefits, on the other hand the disadvantages, of their education or alternatively, their education may have had no impact on them. Perhaps colleges are rather more fortunate than the schools in that most of the students have a clearer objective and, therefore, monitoring over further and higher education might be deemed to be more practical.

resources available for education

During the 1960s there was a fairly favourable climate to expenditure on education and in that decade the proportion of public expenditure devoted to education expanded significantly. But the inclination of society to expend money on education appears to be abating somewhat in the 1970s, but without any lessening of demands. Some recent pieces of research in England and America have called in question the social benefit of increasing the amount we spend on education. The research may not have been well structured, but its results can be seized upon by people who wish to reduce public expenditure. And it has shown that increases in expenditure on the

education of the disadvantaged have not been matched by similar increases in benefit. The proportion of pupils who leave school with no ambition to progress academically does not diminish and in the eyes of some people, in fact, increases.

So, there is a risk that we shall lose the support of some members of society who have looked upon the education service as a valuable instrument in a programme of social engineering and we therefore lose a voice when we are clamouring for resources. I cannot suggest that already we are losing a battle for resources in education, but I notice a hardening of attitudes and the battle becoming more fierce. The programme of capital expenditure for school building has been severely cut back in the most recent financial crisis, although previously some improvements were made in the programme. Much more serious is the battle we have to fight within the authority where the elected members know that ratepayers have to be made happy with clean streets, empty dustbins and adequate lighting. And all this is of particular importance when the members have got to face an election and when the immediate impact of expenditure is shown by the dust cart on its way down the street rather than by the overhead projector that the Chief Education Officer ordered yesterday for the teacher to use.

attracting resources

Our colleagues, the treasurers, whose attitude can vary from seeing it as their job to provide resources for the services the Council has to carry out right through the spectrum to saving money at all costs, can have demands made on them to justify education expenditure and so must put the pressures on us. What are the arguments that we can use to prove that money spent on education contributes in equal value to our society or even shows a profit? At certain levels of education, as I said earlier, we can prove rates of success and certainly the number of qualified men and women being produced by the machine can be measured. But other than in this respect, the tendency is for the public at large, and even for our friends to measure our output by our failures, and the press and television are never reluctant to provide them with the evidence they need, picking up an isolated incident and giving the impression that it is a general problem. The Chief Education Officer has to recognise the need to promote an image for the Education Service that emphasises the achievements and gives a picture of the things we can do well. It may sound cynical, but dressing the window can be very valuable when the argument to obtain resources is being conducted. However, we have to ensure that the goods that are in the window are backed by good stock in the shop behind. It is very often necessary for the Chief Education Officer to maintain pressure in a certain direction to achieve some measure of excellence in perhaps a limited field, and thereby to create an image of success that will bring support for the service.

monitoring the education service

I would not like you to think that I view the struggle to obtain resources as an end in itself. If we could raise money very easily, I would not think it was excusable to waste either the materials it purchased or the efforts of those employed in the service. I am a great believer in obtaining value for money and I think that one of the hardest tasks I have is to obtain as much value for

the ratepayers' money as I am able. In this respect, it becomes important to monitor the service, an exercise that is not at all popular and tends to be very difficult to carry out. Our education service has been built on a tradition of freedom and I suppose it is true to say that in the last 10-15 years the freedom for the individual teacher has become greater than it used to be. And this very freedom makes it easy for the individual practitioner never to come under independent scrutiny. I do not mean by this that the majority of teachers do not set exacting targets for themselves and for their students, but where there is no discipline from an externally moderated examination, the result of the teacher's work is left to a subjective evaluation. The Chief Education Officer has a duty to pupils and parents to ensure that courses are well-founded. Even if there is a very sophisticated inspectorate, the power is rather limited to exhortation and encouragement, and I must say frankly that there is very little that can be done in the case of the very occasional teacher who decides to ignore comment or criticism. I am not arguing for a system of payment by results. All I am trying to show is that the Chief Education Officer has some very blunt instruments for measuring the service and proving whether it is providing value for money.

efficiency of management of further education

Perhaps it is appropriate now to turn our attention to the structure of Further and Higher Education and to ask the question "is it efficiently managed?" As far as the Chief Education Officer is concerned, the degree of monitoring and control that can be applied is a minimum. Obviously, colleges have more discerning clients than schools and the students can, to some extent, take their business elsewhere if what a particular college offers does not suit them. But when it comes to assessing value for money and efficiency I am convinced that there are more searching tests to be applied and I cite only one example - does every college need the vast quantities of equipment that are installed - in industry's terms are we perhaps providing a Rolls Royce when what we really need is a delivery van? But I do not expect to find allies among my audience of Heads of Department who, in fact, form one of the participating groups in the game played every year of squeezing the Authority dry. The other participants are College Principals, the Governors and the Inspectorate. And you may be surprised to know that all this happens with the full blessing of the Secretary of State, who requires the delegation of most functions save the size of the budget.

delegation

The concept of delegation is set out in the Weaver Report (an enquiry into the Government of Colleges of Education). The philosophy of this Report has been applied to other establishments of higher education and further education

> "..... the problem was to strike the correct balance between freedom which institutions of higher education should enjoy, and the social control which democratically elected representative bodies are required to exercise."

Weaver then goes on to show in what areas the LEA may have to take responsibility without help from the Governors

"If a claim arises against a maintained college, any action for damages will be brought against the authority, not the governing body."

power of the Chief Education Officer

In the context of this degree of delegation, the role of the Chief Education Officer is to advise, to encourage, to cajole - in fact, to use all the ways of persuasion but never to give an order.

'Free Trade'

If we are discussing the freedom that is enjoyed by further education, I must mention "free trade". This concept introduced largely by agreement among authorities to enable students to choose courses most suited to them and reinforced by the London area of the London Government Act 1963, is another example where the great deal of freedom which we build into our education system, can, in many cases, prevent the truly efficient use of resources. This is most likely to happen when colleges expand 'A' level courses and there is an attraction over the border for a large number of students from neighbouring authorities. The inter-authority claim for a Sixth Form pupil from a secondary school is £400 p.a. whereas the fee for the same pupil (in this case called a student) following the same courses in a college of further education is £595 p.a.

It is not just a matter of the different fee, but also the fact that the ratepayer is probably supporting an unfilled place in a secondary school as well as paying a fee for the college course. Much as we may try to rationalise the provision for Sixth formers and would be cost conscious, some of our efforts will fail in these circumstances and I am becoming convinced that one of the new problems that we shall have to face very soon is the matter of greater regional control over further education than at present applies.

schools and parental choice

The dichotomy between the freedom of choice and academic freedom in the education service and the efficiency of that service applies in the schools but to a less extent than it does in Further Education and the extent decreases as the children are younger. Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act is very frequently quoted in support of the parent's claim to place his child in a school of his choice:-

"In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred and imposed on them by this Act the Minister and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents."

This section is quoted particularly when children are coming up to transfer from primary to secondary school. There are organisations that have been established in the post war years which help the parents to know of their rights and help them to fight what is seen as bureaucracy. They give advice on how to find one's way through the system, to establish the rights of

individuals. This leads understandably to occasions when there is a confrontation. Very many parents are unable to recognise that there could only be full opportunity for them to exercise their choice if the provision of school places were so generous that there was adequate accommodation in every school to make it possible. The only place I know of where this is the case is New Zealand. When I examine what we have to do to try to meet the demands of parents, I am forced to look at the absurd situation that would arise if parental choice went to the extreme. I wonder what we would do with all the half empty and unpopular schools as well as with the few bulging but popular schools.

change of emphasis

If there ever was a time when Chief Education Officers assumed the god-like image (and I am assured that it has existed), we are unlikely to be worshipped these days - there are many organisations growing up to challenge our views, our decisions and practices. Many of the problems that have existed in the London area for some years, I presume inevitably will spread to other parts of the country and I already see the pressure for more democracy and more participation by the electorate showing in places outside London, particularly in the conurbations. And it becomes of even greater importance for the officer to understand the philosophy of his own authority. It would be a disaster for the service for any officer to be at war with his Committee. I do not mean that the officer can afford to be the rubber stamp for his Committee and never to pose a contrary view. The problem is to maintain the balance and to ensure that whether advice is accepted or rejected, at least the officer's views are respected by the Committee.

corporate management

I spoke a little earlier of "corporate management" - very much the "in" thing with local authorities. I think that "corporate management" is seen from different departments with different eyes. As far as the Education Service is concerned, other people's objectives can be to restrict the Chief Education Officer's influence in the name of "corporate management". Whatever the system or organisation in the individual authority, it is important for the Education Officer to establish good relationships with the other Chief Officers of the Council.

I have not tried to show solutions to the problems that I have outlined and, indeed, I am sure that some of them can only be solved if we are prepared to re-examine basic concepts of freedom built into the education system. What I hope I have done is to show that by facing up to the problems one can accept the constraints they impose and set one's objectives in such a way that conflicts are reduced to a minimum and are in any case not serious."

C W Phillips,
Chief Education
Officer,
Derbyshire

PROBLEMS FACING CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICERS

"As far as any parameters for speaking on this topic may have been drawn for me, I suppose they are to be found in the fact that this course is part of a series concerned with "Improving the Efficiency of Departments in Technical Colleges and Colleges of Further Education". To draw this noose, however, tightly around the topic on which I have been asked to talk to you, would seem to me to be unwarranted circumscription; had I to confine myself to the topic of the role of the Chief Education Officer in relation to the efficiency of College Departments under his control, there would be little for me to say. It is therefore better for me to declare at the outset that I do not feel competent to fulfil that role, so I propose to give myself free rein, comforted by the belief that something of what I say may bear obliquely on your own problems.

I must confess that I begin to stumble in confronting the word "problems". Can there ever have been a time when Education Officers did not have problems? Assuming that such times did not exist, are the ones we face now sui generis or merely problems similar to those of yesterday, blown up, like so many other things, merely to an inflated size?

At the same time it would be unrealistic to consider a world, even for Chief Education Officers, where problems did not exist since it would be merely an abstraction. I make this point because, by becoming over-conscious of problems, one is in danger of becoming obsessed by them or of exaggerating their form and dimensions. That way lies inertia.

expectations of the education service

Nevertheless let us take a closer look at several as they appear to me - just now and in the circumstances of early 1975. One certainly is that of the expectations of the Education Service. For years now the accent has been on the expansion of resources, and the morale of the teaching profession has often been seen to be in direct relation to it. A few examples will suffice: the last decade has witnessed a continuing expansion of the proportion of young people entering higher education; more teachers have become available year by year to improve the teaching/pupil ratio; Building Programmes have coped not only with additional numbers but have been able to improve outmoded facilities. Indeed it would virtually be no hyperbole to assert that progress in education has been measured by many in terms solely of the expansion of resources. This can be a dangerous philosophy; and indeed in two ways. In the first place, there comes the inevitable lowering of morale when contraction occurs, as now, and in the second place emphasis on expansion tends to make us lose sight of what energy, enterprise and ingenuity can achieve without a concomitant expansion of resources.

Any Chief Education Officer must be sensitive to the expectations which have been built up over the last decade or so. It is not for me to hazard a guess as to whether the present contraction will last a long while or not; there are enough people making predictions for better or worse. But in such circumstances, he must seek, as it were, to exploit the situation, to turn the profession in upon itself and to draw from it those reserves of strength and resilience which it undoubtedly possesses. In my view, the profession in recent years has tended to dissipate its energies; its reactions to given situations have been predictable and it has been in danger of becoming insufficiently supple to meet changed circumstances. The world inside the profession and the world outside do not necessarily operate within the same set of dimensions. But no Chief Education Officer can hope to change attitudes such as these by ukase or administrative decisions; public pronouncements will probably do little good either. It requires some approach more oblique and more sensitive for the leaven to begin to work.

role of CEO

Without doubt, the role of the Chief Education Officer comes under review. Is it the same now as it once was? But then has it ever been precisely defined? The traditions point in varying directions. On the one hand there is that of the administrative Chief Education Officer; precise, relevant, meticulous, apparently efficient, often autocratic in the manner of a 19th century Oxford don. Then there is the Chief Education Officer sometimes iconoclastic, frequently impatient and often ignorant of administrative routine, yet an educational innovator, concerned with curriculum development, or with the educational implications of social conditions. The latter is not so concerned with the whole encumbrance of administrative procedures but more concerned with changes in educational ideas and influencing the ways in which children learn and are taught. These probably present a polarity of views; there are many intermediate stands, and even these views themselves have (probably) an element of caricature about them.

corporate management

It has been said that a new age has been born for "Bains" is at hand. Certainly it is a legitimate question to ask in what ways the new concept of corporate management has influenced the role of the Chief Education Officer and his attitude to the problems of the Education Service. The essential concept of the Bains Report was that the affairs of an Authority ought to be managed corporately, and of these the Education Service forms an essential part. I have used the phrase "managed corporately" deliberately as a generic and amorphous phrase for there are many definitions and shades of meaning attributed to it, as one would expect with so many people having rather different interests in its interpretation.

It is perhaps too early to say whether the Chief Education Officer, through his membership of the Management Team, is modifying his traditional role. Certainly the "isolation" of the Education Department, if one can use that phrase as indicating a traditional attitude, is certainly not as marked as it once was. Hypothetically one can envisage situations in which the Chief Education Officer might find himself in a conflict of roles between that as Chief Education Officer per se and that as a member of a management team acting on behalf of the corporate affairs of the Authority. There is in part an unresolved tension between those who view corporate management as a device /

by which the traditional central departments can exercise control over the departments which provide the services, and those who see it rather differently in terms of partnership between the various services which the Authority is under an obligation to provide. The search for a reconciliation of the varying points of view goes on. Whether in the end we shall achieve better and wiser Government the future has still to decide. Certainly the point of equipoise between the traditional role of the Chief Education Officer and his modified (I avoid the word "new") one has not yet, I think, been found.

doubts about educational trends

There is no need for us to indulge in self-pity. And yet perhaps no one can grudge us a little in self-defence. For the expectations of the last 25 years seem to be collapsing about us - and not merely on one front only. There has been a sense in which the history of education has been written as Bury and Stubbs wrote the history of the 19th century - as a movement of virtually unlimited progress towards widening vistas and improving educational standards. The facts as they are now revealed do not permit us to continue to hold that view with any degree of comfort. According to the findings of the E.P.A. research project "about one-fifth of the non-immigrant pupils leave the Primary school at 11 unable to read simple sentences"; there is clear evidence in the report of a cumulative deficit in the educational performance of socially deprived children as they grow older. Frankly we do not know whether in educational terms we can break the cycle of deprivation. Doubts expressed initially by some about the wisdom of raising the school-leaving age to 16 have not been dispelled by the existence of high truancy rates particularly in schools in the inner metropolitan areas. A recent N.F.E.R. Report on the evaluation of the teaching of French in Primary Schools does not bear out the recommendation made in 1966 by the Schools Council on "a general advance being made towards introducing French into Primary Schools". "Monitoring", to use the latest entry into the educational vocabulary, can obviously provide uncomfortable conclusions. What does one make of the last 20 years, when Lord Alexander comments in the issue of Education of 13th December 1974: "Indeed it may reasonably be argued that the three R's should be given an absolute priority". "In the situation which Local Authorities will face in the coming year there are very real dangers unless very great care is taken to protect these fundamentals"?

Higher Education is also witnessing a modification of what were once accepted trends. A decade ago the pathway starting with Robbins was to broaden into a highway leading from school to institutions of Higher Education as the percentage of young people entering higher education increased from year to year. The assumptions, however, behind this continuing percentage are no longer unquestioned; the prophesies are no longer assured. Growth in the size of Sixth Forms has slowed down; applications for institutions of Higher Education are falling behind available places in a number of disciplines; Higher Education indeed seems to have lost some of its popularity. These factors, together with the fall in the birth rate, have prompted the recent revision of students in higher education by 1981 to 640,000. The Colleges of Education, consequent upon a revision of Government policy upon the accepted supply of teachers, are now being transformed and modified by what is virtually a new national development plan for higher education. Nor can comfort be derived

from the sayings and writings of the pundits on the broader educational spectrum. I remember reading several years ago a short book by Lionel Elvin on "Education and Contemporary Society"; it was a book full of hope and promise, setting education in the van as a powerful force for social change. Those Fabian days now seem long since departed. To point the contrast, let me select a few quotations from John Vaizey's recent address to the North of England Education Conference entitled prophetically enough "The end of the Educational Boom" - and I hope they are not torn out of context -

(1) "It may not be sufficient to say that education is more a consequence than a cause of social change ..... but it is equally wrong to say that the evidence at present gives education a larger role in promoting social change."

(2) "The movement towards de-schooling is a profound reaction not only to the failure of the educational system and other social agencies to overcome the urban malaise but to a system which is seen as self-perpetuating, following laws of motion of its own which have no justification beyond the fact that they keep the system going."

(3) "It seems to me that over the next few years we have to re-examine not only our educational institutions to see they are working more effectively but also the content and nature of the teaching and learning process."

Similar doubts could be echoed in other educational writings; witness for example the advocates of cost-benefit study who have sought to point out that over the past decade or longer there has been little improvement in "productivity" from the vast investment of resources in secondary education.

new challenges

So a good deal of the accepted euphoria about education seems to be disappearing, and with its partial disappearance involuntary new challenges, whether conscious or not, are being set to those of us who are in educational administration in particular. Yet the adjustment which, because of these changes, is being demanded of us happens to synchronise with other re-adjustments, almost equally demanding in a different way.

local government reorganisation - staffing

April 1st last year was the date on which the reorganisation of Local Government in England and Wales came into effect. But the passing of that date could not, and did not, imply that all the concomitant problems were thereby solved. Two of substance still remain, only likely to be solved gradually. The first is that of staffing the administrative, including the advisory, educational service. Some Authorities, certainly, were more generous than others in the establishments of staff they approved on re-organisation. But all establishments were, in a sense, empirical and certainly as far as my own service is concerned, the pressures on both senior and middle management staff have been, and remain, severe. We cannot be optimistic about the prospects of improvement in the relatively near future; on the one hand, there is a shortage of certain kinds of staff, depending on the qualifications required; on the other hand, the

Government has expressed its concern at the numbers of staff in Local Government and is proposing to institute some form of control. So the immediate outlook for an improved service, in so far as this is dependent upon an increased number of staff, is not favourable. It ought also to be said - and the point is significant - that many Authorities are working either with new staff or with old staff occupying new positions, and the process of adapting to changed roles, particularly in operating new procedures, is by no means complete.

creating unified policies in local authorities

Nor has it been possible, where Authorities have been amalgamated, completely to harmonise the differing policies of the previous Authorities. The problem has not been by any means one of inadequate preparation - rather one of finance as - this is a point not generally known - no additional resources were granted by Central Government to enable reorganisation to be carried out. So in a number of respects, the new Authorities may be operating policies which differ from one part of their authority to another. The adoption of unified policies can only proceed as money can be made available.

consultation and representation

Perhaps more significant is the change in the climate in which we work; different attitudes nationally have had their impact on local government. There is less general acceptance of authority, if I might use that word to describe the administrative apparatus of government; there is less willingness to believe that any decisions arrived at are made on the basis of rational analysis and the nearest one can come to objective judgement. So the process of consultation and representation is more protracted; one has to be tolerant even if the same point is being made for the nth time. Local government has, i believe, become more political; I use that word in a generic rather than a specific sense: the professional associations are aware of this just as surely as I am. Members of the public nowadays tend to write or to speak to Members of Parliament before they have even approached the Local Education Authority to ascertain whether the information they need is available or whether their complaint can be remedied; indeed, I can vouch for the fact that I know sometimes which M.P. I am likely to hear from by reading the evening paper. One has to accept philosophically changes both in public attitudes and in the ways in which the administrative machine has to operate. The general effect, I believe, is that the Chief Education Officer discharges his responsibilities in a more open, a more public and perhaps on occasion a more controversial way. This modification of role possibly calls for qualities which Chief Education Officers in the past did not find it necessary to possess or alternatively to exhibit.

financial constraints

I have deliberately avoided making this talk one on the problems of "growth" or "no growth" in the education service. To have spoken of the present financial difficulties in detail would only be to underline what is already known; they are, however, important in that they set, as it were, financial terms of reference within which one has to work. Two general points I would, however, wish to make. It would be an illusion to adduce that greater financial constraints make less of a demand on administrative time and energy; on the other hand they seem to me often to call to a greater degree on reserves of

ingenuity and resourcefulness. In a way, they are a challenge, provided they do not occur too often.

The second point is this. One accepts that the moment never appears to be opportune for changes in this or that, but I almost find it incredible that Government or Providence or both could have devised a time-table which decided all of the following things should happen in local government about the same time: local government reorganisation, including devising a new set of relationships with the Area Health Authorities, a new Development Plan for Higher Education, the Reorganisation of Secondary Education, and the onset of a period of financial constraints of apparently unlimited duration.

the present in perspective

It would be understandable to think that this paper sounds like a chronicle of problems only, set against a background of "growth , no growth" and committed budgets, and unrelieved by previous optimism in the belief of constant and unvarying educational progress. It is always difficult, some would say impossible, to set the present in perspective and I often wonder whether the present, in the number and complexity of its problems, is so different from other periods in the last twenty-five years. I think that probably it is; partly because of the coincidence in time of a number of different problems and partly because of the general changes in the climate of opinion, both within the education service and outside it. Set, however, in context by the historian writing 100 years from now, they may not seem so significant. However they are with us and have to be wrestled with. The important thing is that they should not be allowed to be thought so overwhelming as to destroy sense, rationality or purpose in education; taken one by one and using time as the great healer (as it often is), progress can be made if not in solving them (and many problems we live with rather than solve) but at least of smoothing their asperities. Every Chief Education Officer must retain some faith in the value of education, even on the darkest days, and despite all the administrative paraphernalia through which he has to work and the political buffeting with which he has on occasion to contend, there must remain with him a belief that what is being sought and achieved will make a contribution to the education of the individual, be he young or old, whether in the context of his contribution to the community or as an individual with his own interests and inclinations."

J D Hender,
Chief Executive,
West Midlands
Metropolitan
County Council

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

"Whatever criticism can be levelled at local government at the present time, no rational person could suggest that there has been a lack of experimentation in its approach to management. Indeed, one of the few growth industries in this country is that relating to the organisation of courses, seminars and the production of papers on local government management and its structures. We have broken away from the rigid, departmental approach, which often meant that resource allocation was based on the bargaining power of the vocal extrovert; through a development process of considering relatively low level management techniques, such as O. & M.; to a period of worshipping the computer; and now to a time when thought is being given to the fundamental problems of decision-making in the public sector.

pressures for change

Why was there a need for change? For many years there has been a growing realisation that local authorities, like other bodies in the public sector, are faced with an increasing pressure of problems and, in many cases, an increasing inability to meet those problems or perhaps even to understand them. One thing which has emerged more clearly in latter years is the appreciation that problems, particularly in urban areas, tend to be inter-related and that it is of limited value to think of a housing, social welfare, industrial or educational problem in their single context. Very often, each aspect forms part of a complex system of inter-related problems. Local authorities have also been faced with severe resource constraints and at no time have their resources been anywhere near adequate to meet the problems they have a duty to try and solve. This has led to an appreciation that, to make the best use of limited resources and to try and solve difficulties rather than merely develop services, calls for a new approach to local government management.

External pressures have also helped in this regard. The changes in government procedures for grants have very often tended to push local government towards a corporate system and there are healthy signs that central government itself is now taking far more seriously the problems of longer-term planning in the public sector. Hopefully, this could lead to at least a partial breakaway from the "stop-go" efforts which have hindered our development for so many years.

corporate management

The new approaches, often vaguely described as "corporate management" or "corporate planning", basically seek to develop a system which tries to examine problems in depth. They seek to look at the local authority as a

single entity rather than as a collection of disparate services; to consider alternative policies and to deal with resource allocation on a more logical basis.

If it is to mean anything, the system of corporate management must be concerned not only with the formulation of policy but also with its effective implementation and - perhaps most important of all - with the development of methods of monitoring results of what is actually happening, so that these can be taken into account in future policy decisions.

Prior to the reformation of local government in April 1974, we were aided by the Bains Report on management structures. It has become popular by those who wish to continue in the old inefficient ways to deride the Bains Report, but I support it. My support is not based on an acceptance of every single word of Bains, but rather in using it in the way it was intended - as a series of guidelines to the new management approaches. In my view, it is a pity that Bains was charged with producing a report on management organisation and structure before there had been a clarification of the processes of decision-making. But, as so often, we tend to approach management from a reverse direction. It would have been better to have first considered the process of decision-making before trying to alter the structure of local government management.

planning

It is good that there is now an appreciation that it is not a profitable exercise for a local authority or any other body to produce series of plans which are unrelated to each other. Local government has developed tiers of plans - for example, the structure plan which looks beyond the boundaries of the authority at the physical, economic and social planning of an area. Then there are specific plans to deal with the problems of transportation, waste disposal; other plans which are related to local areas within an authority; and plans for the development of important services - education and social welfare.

All these plans have an inter-relationship and they are all competitors for common resources. Therefore, there needs to be a master or corporate plan which provides the base from which the other plans can be prepared and which tries to ensure that all the various plans form a logical pattern insofar as they are compiled on the basis of a common order of priority of major objectives and on a logical allocation of resources. In other words, the plans should be realistic; they should relate to problems and to the ability in terms of resources of the authority to attempt to solve those problems; they should form a basis for action, rather than merely being a glossy publication which attracts a great deal of initial publicity and which performs very little other useful purpose.

It is necessary to plan over various periods. Up to a period of five years is a time of implementation in local authorities - major changes can seldom be introduced in a shorter period. Between five and ten years is the period on which the policy-makers should be concentrating their attention, because in

that timespan it is possible to make major change. I doubt whether it is possible to look realistically far beyond ten years at the present time, except perhaps to erect a series of signposts for particularly significant items which will arise in the longer-term future.

In the much shorter term, it is realised that the old system of preparing the budget in the winter with a spring pruning exercise is no longer a viable proposition, if indeed it ever was. The budgetary procedure needs to be tied in more closely with longer-term plans and should occupy the whole twelve months of the year. It should not be just a slashing exercise as the rate-making draws near.

If corporate management is to work, it must be accepted and employed in depth in a local authority. It cannot relate merely to a chief officers' "tea party"; it relates to working throughout departments, and this involves colleges as well as the education department. To service it, it is necessary to bring together the various disciplines in corporate groups, but here there is a danger because these groups must not be allowed to proliferate so that they become self-perpetuating organisations. They need to be controlled and their work needs to be monitored but, at the same time, there must be a realisation that most problems call for the skills of more than one discipline to solve them, particularly if they are of a complex nature.

At the present time there are a variety of approaches to corporate management in local authorities throughout the country. This is good, although it is sad that many of these are theoretical rather than practical and in some cases I am sorry to say that corporate management has meant little more than the adding of the words "chief executive" to the old title of "town" or "county clerk" and the old systems have still jogged along. This is not what corporate management is about.

implementation

There are a number of practical points and difficulties in its implementation which can be stated briefly:-

(1) There needs to be a single management system within the authority - the corporate approach - it must never be allowed to remain merely as the "icing on top of the cake" while the old departmental approach continues as the "solid stodge" in the centre.

(2) It must involve elected members of the authority, if it is to succeed; it cannot be seen only as an officers' activity.

(3) It needs to be flexible and not to become so rigid that it quickly develops the same disadvantages as were apparent in the departmental system.

(4) It calls for a great degree of participation by all the people in the organisation and the ability to react to those outside it and to take into account the views of bodies who are entitled to consultation and participation.

(5) It must attempt to avoid the dangers of procrastination. One of the difficulties, particularly in any system which relies upon participation as its mainspring, is that it turns into a glorious debating society and that little action emerges out of a vast sausage-machine. This is a danger for corporate management as for any other management system - it can be too much talk and too little action!

(6) Another danger which is found in any formalised system is the suppression of ideas and enthusiasm. The system must have the ability to allow for the quick percolation of good ideas and must encourage people to show enthusiasm and enterprise rather than to be seen as "cogs in a vast bureaucratic machine". By trying to draw in disciplines, getting them to work together and ensuring that management is not something merely for top people, the corporate approach has a good chance of encouraging this initiative and enterprise which is so much needed in the public sector.

performance review

Often, today, corporate management is linked with the development of performance review - a subject which is dealt with in the Bains Report and one which is highly controversial. My own view is that we have a lot to learn on this subject and we have not yet progressed to the state when we can review performance adequately in the public sector. I know of no suitable yardstick by which it is possible to measure activities of our colleges and yet few would deny the need for an examination of your performance and that of all others engaged in local authority work. Here, I think we can only look forward to gradual, but I hope constructive, progress in this era.

the future

What of the future? One of the facts of life, certainly for the next few years, will be a situation of very low growth in the resources available to deal with problems and yet these problems themselves are not going to diminish in importance or intensity. The challenge for the corporate system is whether it can make the best use of limited resources in this difficult period. We must wait to see if it is successful.

A further major challenge arises from the reformation of local government and the two-tier system throughout the country, with the additional statutory bodies of water and health. The corporate approach within individual local authorities can only be a partial answer to the management problems in the public services of its area. There is a need for the corporate approach to develop beyond the boundaries of an individual authority onto an inter-authority basis. Here is the challenge to local government management. If we succeed, then local government will continue and prosper. If we do not, then a question mark must hang over the heads of not only those interested in local government management, but indeed over the whole future of local government in this country."

W U Jackson,
Chief Executive,
Kent County
Council.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

"The following assertations and questions are intended to provide a framework for a talk and discussion on the subject of the development of corporate management in the new local government.

What is meant by and what is the need for corporate management in Local Government?

Corporate management is a phrase borrowed from commerce and industry and is used to acknowledge the fact that certain activities need to be integrated and controlled to an extent and in a way that makes the whole greater than the parts. Local government reorganisation has been used to advance the cause advocated by those who believe that "togetherness" in management in local government is a more satisfactory state than that created by an independent professional approach to the problems of practising the art of local government.

The following points are paraded in aid of the view that "togetherness" is right:-

1. A common "Board of Directors" - the Members.
2. A common purse - the pockets of ratepayers and tax payers - with competing claims.
3. Common services - with consequential scope for economics in the provision of specialist services.
4. A common cause - service to the community.
5. Common interests - Education/Social Services/Police/Transport/Roads. It is not impossible to see the link between Education and Social Services although the distance between Education and Roads might, at first sight, seem to be a wide one.

Is corporate management in Local Government any different from corporate management in any other sphere of activity?

It may be easy to take the first step and agree that there is a case for some measure of corporate management. The second and more difficult step is to decide the extent and how best it can be achieved. The following points are intended to identify possible reasons why corporate management in local government can and should be distinguished from corporate management in a business context:-

1. Variety of objectives - local government is, in fact, a series of separate businesses.
2. Party caucuses leading to political control.
3. Accountability - not to the shareholder but to the public and/or to Parliament.
4. Responsibility both for the implementation and interpretation of national policies.

5. Public participation.
6. The difficulty in finding measures of achievement that facilitate a review of performance - there is no profit motive in local government.

Some special ingredients in the Local Government management mix.

Because management in local government is subject to different influences to those experiences in other forms of activity including industry, commerce, the civil service and also nationalised industries, there are some elements in the management set up that are unique either as to the nature or the degree. These include:-

1. A Committee system that results in Member involvement on occasion in some detail in dav to day administration as well as in policy making.
2. Constraints on policy-making that reflect the fact that it is necessary to conform with national decisions - the power exercised over local government through the operation of loan sanctions.
3. The development of specialised departments with a strong professional bias in the top echelons of administration.
4. The need to establish formal working relationships with a variety of outside agencies, eg. other local authorities, area health authorities and local authority associations.

If the need for corporate management is accepted then the question arises of how it should be achieved, given the constraints and peculiarities in management practice identified in paragraphs 2 and 3.

The following is an indication of a possible approach based on Kent practice and culled from the Bains report:-

1. Member organisation. (See over).
2. Management Team

   Permanent members:
   - Chief Executive
   - County Secretary and Solicitor
   - County Treasurer
   - Director of Social Services
   - County Education Officer
   - County Planning Officer
   - County Surveyor

   Responsibilities: To consider and report on matters of common interest and to supervise and ensure the efficient working of the separate departments in accordance with the overall policy of the County Council.

3. The support teams:-
   - Deputies Team
   - Amenities and Recreation Team
   - Computer and Management Services Team
   - Land, Supplies and Services Team
   - New Communities Team

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Member organisation

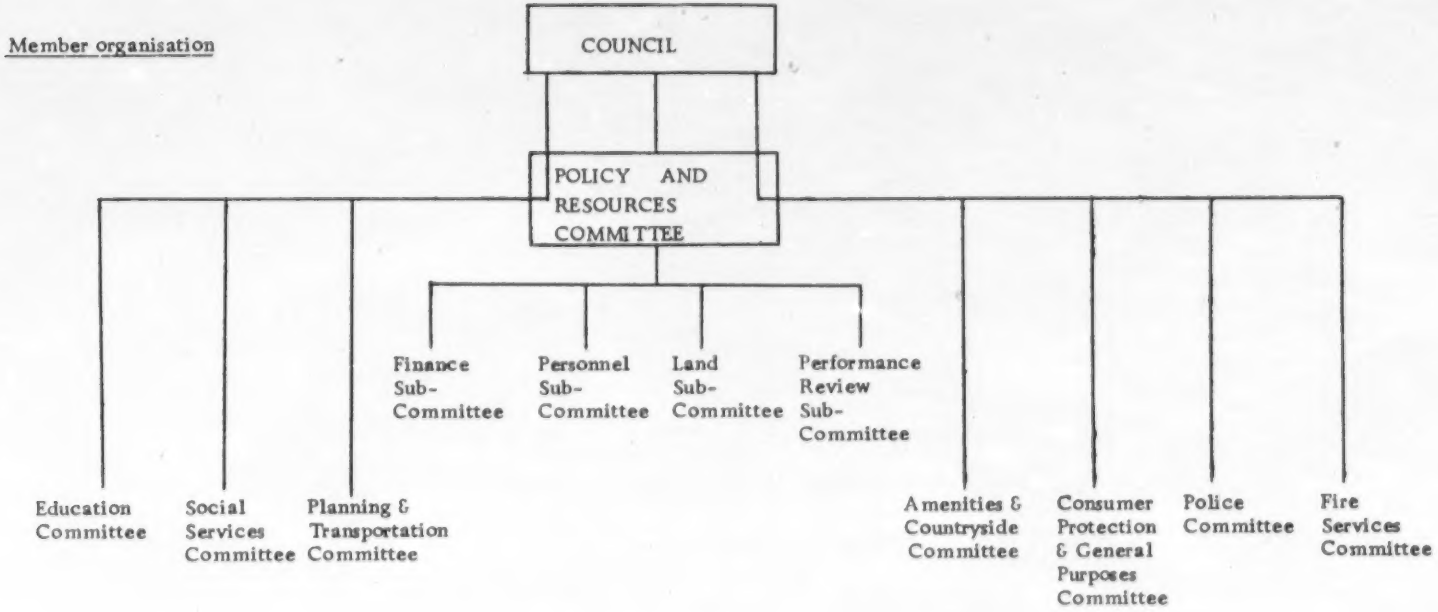

Diagram 2(a) - Committee structure - Non-metropolitan county

Notes:- 1. A separate National Parks committee will be required in appropriate counties.

2. The Police committee is the police authority, but by convention it is expected that it will use the same lines of communication as other committees. The diagram reflects this.

Personnel Team
Research and Intelligence Team
Transport and Transportation Team

The terms of reference for the above teams are shown in the Appendix which follows this paper.

4. Formal links have also to be established to co-ordinate activity with:-
   1. District Authorities
   2. Area Health Authorities
   3. Regional Water Authorities
   4. Local Authority Associations - Association of County Councils.

5. Some possible faults:-
   1. Time consuming for senior staff
   2. Cumbersome to operate
   3. Too easy to justify delays
   4. Expensive to operate because of the size of the superstructure.

The relevance of corporate management to motivation and control in a large organisation.

Any large organisation has problems of accountability, control and motivation and one of the main aims of corporate management must be to overcome or compensate for these inherent weaknesses. An effort needs to be made to deal with, amongst other things, the following points:-

1. A clear understanding of objectives and what is required throughout the whole organisation.
2. Good communications so that changes of direction and emphasis are quickly made clear to those who will be held responsible.
3. The achievement of a sense of commitment - through a measure of involvement in decision taking as well as execution.
4. Training.
5. Review of performance and measure of achievement.
6. Consistent personnel policies.

Some suggested aims and gains of corporate management in Local Government

1. Elimination of woolly thinking - leading to better and more definite decisions.
2. Increased explicitness in policy making.
3. Breaking down of professional and departmental barriers.
4. Creation of a perspective and framework for all decisions.
5. An awareness of the inter-connection between departmental activities.
6. Generation of a spirit of co-operation.
7. Stimulation of a constructively critical approach.

Corporate planning as part of corporate management

A distinction is sometimes drawn between corporate management and corporate planning in acknowledging the fact that a corporate management structure will not necessarily produce a corporate plan, nor does a corporate plan necessarily

result in corporate management. It is convenient to consider the processes of corporate planning as justifying separate consideration as an identifiable and distinct process. Some points for consideration in this connection:-

1. Do you prepare a plan or plans?
2. If you settle for an attempt at planning as a whole, how can you deal with the manipulation of detail in a situation such as that of Kent County, which is now spending £200m a year?
3. Is planned programme budgeting a non-starter?
4. Can statements of objectives and assessments of needs provide an alternative?
5. What use are objectives and measures of need if there is a rationing of resources?
6. What contribution can forward forecasting make when the hand of central government is on the main tap of resources?
7. Does firm forward planning tend to induce rigidity?
8. What are the relationships between structure planning which is primarily a land use function, and corporate planning?
9. Have community plans a place in the scheme of things for the future and what are the implications for resource allocation?

Some possible implications for education

Education obviously has a future. The kind of future and control of the future is perhaps more in question now than at any time since the Education Act 1944. Changes are certain. What those changes will be is guesswork. There may very well be:-

1. A more critical questioning of historical causes as well as a demand for better information about future implications of current developments.
2. A more critical approach to any new initiatives.
3. Related to both 1 and 2, a search for measures of need and tests of effectiveness in some areas.
4. A demand for a cost conscious approach to expenditure.
5. A search for alternatives.
6. Sharing of facilities.

Local Government and the crystal ball

Speculation on future practice and future developments in local government is a reasonably safe occupation. If you get it right you can claim credit, if you get it wrong then you are in the company of the majority and it will soon be safely forgotten. There are, however, very substantial pressures on the whole practice of local government and some combination of the following factors could conspire to bring about dramatic changes:-

1. Lack of buoyancy in rating system coupled with a growing demand for more and better services.
2. The Kilbrandon report.
3. The Layfield Committee.
4. The development of Parish and Neighbourhood Councils as part of the grass roots of local democracy.
5. Increasing public participation.
6. Public cynicism coloured by the faint tinge of corruption seen in the activities of a few Authorities."

APPENDIX TERMS OF REFERENCE OF OFFICERS' TEAMS

1. Deputies' Team

This Team should concern itself primarily with matters referred to it by the Management Team. It is intended that it should look into specific areas of work and relieve the burden of the Management Team by producing papers for its consideration. The Deputies Team will also concern itself with project appraisal/cost effectiveness/performance review. The old County Council undertook a number of cost effectiveness exercises which proved significantly successful and involved all appropriate Departments. The approach was a systematic investigation of selected items within the "committed" based expenditure of the Authority, that is, other than new developments or increases which are very carefully scrutinised during the estimate process. Criteria for cost effectiveness exercises were, in the main but not exclusively, areas of greatest expenditure and fastest growth or where substantial assets were no longer required for their original purpose and could be realised. This work progresses outside the existing corporate machinery and as a result, there was not a carefully planned forward programme of appraisal exercises linked with the objectives of the Authority which is necessary if limited resources are to be used to the full. The Deputies Team are therefore to be responsible for preparing a forward programme, with priorities, for the approval of the Performance Review Group of the Policy and Resources Committee and, subject to the instructions of that Group, proposing variations to the programme from time to time.

2. Amenities and Recreation Team

This Team should formulate and consider policies and co-ordinate advice for Members and work as a back-up Officers' Team to the Amenities and Countryside Committee of the County Council.

3. Computer and Management Services Team

This Team should deal with computer developments and the rationalisation of the use of computer time in the future, with the added function of management services to provide a common link with the body likely to be set up by The Kent County Joint Committee.

From Notes of a meeting held on 10 September 1974.

i) This team should deal with computer developments and the rationalisation of the use of computer time in the future, with the added function of management services, to provide a common link with the body likely to be set up by the Kent County Joint Committee. The overall objective is to ensure the best use of computer and management services resources.

ii) Computer

a. To receive reports on current computer applications and to disseminate information to Departments;
b. to consider and if necessary make recommendations on the application of computer systems throughout the Authority;
c. to consider the development of the use of the computer, co-ordinating the requirements of the Departments when there are common interests;
d. to review from time to time the long term (four or five years) plan for the use of the computer and progress on the planned development of applications;
e. to consider developments in computer software and hardware, and the applications in use or being developed by other authorities.

iii) Management Services

a. To consider the development, scope and deployment of management services, their techniques and resources;
b. to recieve reports on particular aspects of programmes of work in hand;
c. to receive reports on matters arising from the planning and operation os services to management as these affect future policies;
d. to consider the extent of and arrangements for inter-authority work.

iv) Other Matters

a. To ensure liaison with the Research and Intelligence Team on projects having implications for inter departmental use of data;
b. to ensure liaison with the Personnel Team on matters having implications for the broad issues of manpower use and motivation;
c. to encourage the training and education of staff in computer uses and the principles of management services techniques.

4. Lands, Supplies and Services Team

This Team should provide the back-up services to the Lands, Supplies and Services Group of the Policy and Resources Committee. Consideration should be given by it to the possibility of replacing or supplementing the monitoring function performed by one of the old Sub-Teams by some form of project co-ordination in the future.

5. New Communities Team

The development of the County during the next twenty years or so is likely to be largely through the medium of a string of new neighbourhood units. As these will establish new communities, it is important that all the expertise and resources of the County Council are brought to bear at the earliest possible stage and that this is done within the corporate machinery so that future resources and manpower implications are properly thought well in advance.

Notes of a meeting held on 10 June 1974

AGREED that the Management Team should be informed that the New Communities Team takes the view that the work of establishing new communities falls under four main heads:-

1. Questions of general policy and procedures in the abstract.
2. Consideration of means of developing New Communities in specific cases when the general location of development has been established.
3. Implementation of the proposals in specific cases (especially if the County Council are the Agency involved).
4. Consideration of the results not only during and after actual building work but also in connection with the initial planning of the project.

These four stages are not mutually exclusive and neither can each stage be dealt with within the County Council by one officer group to the exclusion of others.

Initially, the Team takes the view that the following are primarily responsible for giving inter-departmental advice on each of the four stages:-

Stage 1

Is primarily on an inter-departmental basis the responsibility of the New Communities Team. Under this heading the Team would seek to learn from experience elsewhere and research already done.

Stage 2

As a background it must be remembered that most new Development will be carried out privately (subject to any change in the law) or by Housing Authorities and that District Councils are the Housing Authorities and in most cases responsible for the issue of planning consents. However, the County Council is responsible for the Structure Plan which in broad terms identifies the location of the new communities, and is also responsible for the provision of highways, education and other services required as a result of the housing development. The Team considers it has a vital role to play in establishing priorities for the various schemes, in the overall co-ordination of the several schemes that might be about to develop at any one time making recommendations about which schemes should be developed by which Agency, in maintaining momentum in the formative stages of the schemes, and generally monitoring the situation.

Stage 3

Is primarily the responsibility of the Project Co-ordinator in cases in which the County Council are the primary Agency involved. However, he should be aware of the policies that have led to the plan that he is to implement and his experience should be made readily available to all concerned with the development of other communities. The New Communities Team would therefore expect that the Project Co-ordinator should have constant access to the new Communities Team and the Team in turn would expect to be kept in touch with all major developments affecting the implementation of any proposal.

Stage 4

Is primarily at officer level on an inter-departmental basis a matter for the New Communities Team.

The Team considered that its Terms of Reference did not include consideration of assembly areas unless any particular proposal was specifically referred to it on the ground that it affected a New Community.

6. Personnel Team

The philosophy of the new machinery has been to separate personnel matters from management services and this Team has been established in accordance with that philosophy to provide the necessary back-up service to the Personnel Group of the Policy and Resources Committee.

7. Research and Intelligence Team

The purpose of this Team is to clarify and identify research activities throughout the Authority and to collaborate as necessary with the Computer and Management Services Team.

Notes of a meeting held on 23 April 1974.
The Team compared these Terms of Reference with those of the Previous Research and Intelligence Group and it was stressed that determination of data requirements was primarily a function for the individual department concerned, this Team being a means of bringing such data to the notice of other Departments.

AGREED the main function of the Team was to act as a forum, gathering information for identification by each of the representative Departments and to discuss methods of storing such information.

8. Transport and Transportation Team

This Team should initiate action on the many varied aspects of the County Council's involvement in this work and provide the necessary back-up facilities for the transport side on the Planning and Transportation Committee of the County Council.

General

It is not intended that the terms of reference of these Teams should be too particularly or narrowly specified, but that they should concern themselves with matters which they themselves identify and matters which are specifically referred to them.

All of these Teams should review their performance after one year's working and report to the Management Team, through the Deputies Team, on any suggested improvements in the constitution, membership and servicing of the Teams. In particular, the Computer and Management Services Team and the Research and Intelligence Team, should submit a joint report on the desirability or otherwise of their amalgamation.

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